

A dozen ways to get better at feedback:

- Gather feedback regularly during the year – you’ll build up a pattern more easily that way
- Get to the point
- Be very specific – avoid generalisations
- Stay calm and neutral in your voice, tone and demeanour
- Avoid assumptions. Concentrate on what has been seen and heard
- Avoid the horns/halo effect i.e. something good or bad that has happened recently and let it affect the whole meeting
- The “feedback sandwich” doesn’t work – you need to provide each piece of feedback in a timely fashion i.e. when it happens
- Separate the person and the problem. You may well be friends (or the opposite) but you need to be consistent in your approach. Respect is key.
- Make it timely – as soon after the event (or your knowledge of it) as you can
- Take time to do it properly – not running by them in the corridor (it happens)!
- Create a system! Get a notebook for each person, or a folder for all. Keep copies of your discussions in it, giving you an easily-accessible store of data
- Remember that emotion is normal and natural. You don’t have to solve how the person feels – but you can acknowledge that it’s hard/difficult/upsetting for them. Likewise, you don’t need to tolerate “bad” behaviour – rages, shouting, threats

The AID(E) Model

- **Action:** I need to talk to you about...When you.....did/said.....
- **Impact:** The impact for me/the team/the firm/you is
- **Desired** outcome: Next time I’d like you to....
- **Explore:** Tell me about...What’s your perspective.....

Some important stuff:

- Feedback is delivered in order to affect a change (if it’s negative) or maintain good performance (if it’s positive). Focus on how to do that – it’s easier than leaving a vacuum
- Focus on the past, yes, but also the present and the future
- Stick to what’s relevant – avoid discussions about “everyone else” – this is about them
- Use “I” versus “You”. You are choosing how to feel/think - when it comes to behaviour, intention and effect are not always the same. However, if the effect is a negative one on you, the person needs to discuss what they can do differently to change that effect
- There’s no point in hoping for the best – if it’s a problem, you have to make the person aware of it
- Remember....people will want to reflect and respond. Allow them to do that
- Remember to listen as well as talk!



Get better at receiving feedback:

- Keep an open mind. People are unlikely to give you feedback if you are defensive, fly into a rage, deny, or try to brush it off
- Listen. Really listen to what's being said. Practise all the hallmarks of a good listener – keep your body language and facial expressions relaxed for starters
- Show you have listened to what's being said by summarising what's been said to show you've understood
- Ask questions to clarify what's being said. Ask them in the spirit of really understanding, not being clever
- Ask for examples – that will help you understand what people are talking about. Examples will also help you decide not only what *not* to do but to identify alternatives
- Feel free to check with other people to see if this feedback forms part of a pattern. However, remember this: if you have a reputation for difficult behaviour, people are probably unwilling to tell you this to your face – hence the reason it's coming from your appraiser
- Remember that this feedback is being given to you in order to help you effect a positive change in how you work. Nothing else

Some important stuff:

- Most people find giving feedback a bit of a challenge, precisely because they never know how the other person is going to react
- Try and show the person providing you with the feedback that you really appreciate it. Difficult messages, well-delivered, are amongst some of the best feedback we can get
- If you do find that you're getting hostile, defensive or angry, take a deep breath. It's a simple technique but it works
- Equally, focusing on the feedback by asking questions and restating what's been said can help defuse those feelings
- If you really disagree, are angry or upset, and want to talk to the feedback giver further, wait until your emotions are under control

Feeling brave and constructive?

- Approach the people who've given the feedback. Thank them for it. Explain what you've decided to do instead that will be helpful and ask them to be on the lookout for it. Equally, if they see you slipping back into old habits, let you know (privately) what they are seeing. This takes a lot of courage, but will change rapidly people's perceptions of you

